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**Press Release**

21 August 2020

##### \*\* EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 24 AUGUST, 9am\*\*

**SCOTTISH OPERA REVEALS A PROGRAMME OF OUTDOOR SOCIALLY-DISTANCED PERFORMANCES**

Following the Scottish Government’s update to the route map out of the Covid-19 crisis, Scottish Opera is thrilled to announce a programme of seated outdoor performances, including a special production of Puccini’s *La bohème* and Pop-up Opera performances of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, Gilbert & Sullivan’s *The Gondoliers* and a new work, *The Song of the Clyde,* by Scottish composer Karen MacIver.

These performances, the first with live audiences in over six months, are in addition to a live online stream on Friday 18 September of Janáček’s *The Diary of One Who Disappeared,* just announced as part of the Lammermuir Festival.

With a run of performances for both *La bohème* and the three Pop-up Operas, the Company brings live opera back to the stage with appropriate physical distancing observed at all times by performers, backstage staff and audiences.

Puccini’s tragic love story *La bohème* is given a powerful reinterpretation inspired by the current pandemic by Director Roxana Haines. Using an abridged score by Jonathan Dove, which involves seven soloists and a reduced orchestra, Scottish Opera’s staging places a small audience right in the middle of the action, in the car park (under a canopy) of the Company’s Edington Street Production Studios in Glasgow, for a run of five early evening performances from Saturday 5 September. Tickets go on sale from Thursday 27 August, 10am.

The popular Pop-up Opera roadshow kicks off on Friday 4 September at The Beacon Arts Centre in Greenock. Other confirmed locations include Platform Theatre in Easterhouse, The Riverside Museum in Glasgow, Eden Court in Inverness, Heart of Hawick in the Borders, Edinburgh Zoo and the Museum of Flight in East Lothian. Further dates and locations will be announced as details are confirmed. Tickets are FREE and will be available to reserve from Thursday 27 August.

**Alex Reedijk,** General Director, said: ’After over five months of lockdown, I am delighted that Scottish Opera can now begin to bring live singing and playing back to our audiences in Scotland. Many of them have shared with us what an exceptionally difficult time this has been, so we are delighted that we can begin to offer live performances again, even if only in reduced scale and appropriately socially distanced at present. As we know, the shared, live experience of entertainment brings so much pleasure to audience and performers, and, of course, it is great for everyone at Scottish Opera to be making work again.’

**Further details**

**La bohème**

Set in the modern day and sung in English, this production brings to life the heart-wrenching tale of costume maker Mimì, played by **Elizabeth Llewellyn**, with **Rhian Lois** as Musetta, both making their Scottish Opera debuts. They are joined by **Samuel Sakker** (*Kátya Kabanová* 2019) as Rodolfo, **Roland Wood** (*Tosca* 2019) as Marcello, **David Ireland** as Colline, The Robertson Trust Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Arthur Bruce** (*The Narcissistic Fish* 2020) as Schaunard, and **Francis Church** (*Breaking the Waves* 2019) as Alcindoro. Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford** conducts The Orchestra of Scottish Opera in Jonathan Dove’s arrangement of Puccini’s score in performances that last around 1 hour 35 minutes with no interval.

The production is directed by **Roxana Haines** (*Fox-tot!* 2019) and designed by Glasgow-based **Anna Orton**, with specially commissioned graffiti art designs by **artpistol Projects**, an independently run, public and commercial arts group, based in Glasgow which bring the outdoor location to life.

In a twist to the classic tale, Mimì struggles to make ends meet as a freelance costume designer for opera, ballet and theatre. Meanwhile, singer-songwriter Musetta is a local celebrity, Marcello is a scenic painter dabbling in street art, Rodolfo is a writer, Schaunard a busking musician, and Colline a sort of modern philosopher. The characters are all freelance creatives living out of the trucks in the Scottish Opera car park, having ransacked the Company’s Production Studios, desperate to find a way to survive.

Director **Roxana Haines** said: ‘Join us for this immersive, site-specific production of *La bohème* which is bright, bold and full of appreciation for the world around us – a world that has, for the past six months, been held together by health systems, medical practitioners and spontaneous eruptions of art. The value of art, creativity, culture and community has never been more apparent than when they have all been taken away from us. We have chosen to stage this production by turning the restrictions we face into creative challenges, and reminding ourselves, as Rodolfo says, that “it's art to the rescue, a knight in shining armour”. We have a wonderfully experienced cast collaborating on this new version of *La bohème*, which is an absolute gift for a director.’

**Stuart Stratford**, Scottish Opera Music Director said: ‘In these uncertain and anxious times *La bohème* has never been more important to perform. The transformation that Puccini makes to the drama leaves us in awe at the fragility, depth and ultimately the soaring resilience of the human spirit against overwhelming adversity.’

**Pop-up Opera**

There are three brilliant FREE shows on offer. *A Little Bit of Don Giovanni* and *A Little Bit of The Gondoliers* are cleverly re-written 25-minute versions of the full operas, while *The Song of The Clyde* has been created specifically for families.

The shows are performed in a specially adapted trailer to create a portable stage to adhere with social distancing guidelines. While past productions of Pop-up Operas have accommodated both the audience and performers inside the mobile Theatre Royal trailer, this year performances are al fresco with a covered stage and audiences out front in the open air, seated in social/household bubbles.

The shows are brought to life by storyteller **Allan Dunn**, singers **Sarah Power**, **Stephanie Stanway**, **Aidan Edwards** and **Andrew McTaggart**, instrumentalists **Andrew Drummond Huggan**, **Sasha Savaloni** and **Ian Watt**, and a series of colourful illustrations by Tim Gravestock, Otto Von Beech and Iain Piercy.

Arranged by **Derek Clark**, Scottish Opera’s Head of Music, *A Little Bit of Don Giovanni* offers highlights from Mozart’s classic dark tale of seduction. The Don sets his sights on Donna Anna, but when her father intervenes, it costs the elder man his life – and Don Giovanni must flee. But as the shadows close in and the mistakes of his past begin to catch up with him, the Don’s tangled web of lies and betrayal begins to unravel.

One of Gilbert & Sullivan’s most popular comic operas has been whittled down by **Derek Clark** to create *A Little Bit of The Gondoliers.* Originally planned to complement Scottish Opera’s mainstage production of *The Gondoliers* which was due to tour Scotland and London earlier this year, the whimsical opera tells the story of two happy-go-lucky gondoliers in Venice who discover that one of them is, in fact, heir to the throne of a distant kingdom.

*The Song of the Clyde*, composed by **Karen MacIver** with words by **Allan Dunn**, tells the story of one of Scotland’s most famous rivers. Audiences are invited to journey back in time and place, tracing the history of the Clyde from ancient times to the present day. Songs and stories tell of the generations who lived and worked along its banks, as it winds a path from its source high in the hills of South Lanarkshire down through the Clyde Valley to Glasgow and further onwards to the ‘tail of the bank’ near Greenock – the deepest estuary waters in Britain.

Scottish Opera’s Director of Outreach and Education, **Jane Davidson** said: ‘Scottish Opera’s Pop-up tour is even more delighted than ever to be out and about across the country, performing a selection of miniature gems from the opera repertoire. Alongside the dark and powerful tale of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, you will be transported to Venice to observe the complicated love lives of two lads who make their living on the waterways of that most romantic of cities in Gilbert & Sullivan’s *The Gondoliers*. Continuing with the watery theme, a new show for families with younger children, *The Song of The Clyde*, traces the history that sprang up along the banks of one of Scotland’s most famous rivers from ancient times right up to the present day. As once was said, Glasgow made the Clyde and the Clyde made Glasgow.’

*Pop-up Opera* is sponsored by Baillie Gifford and supported by Scottish Opera’s Education Angels.

-ENDS-

[www.scottishopera.org.uk](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk)

You can follow Scottish Opera on Facebook. Twitter and Instagram **@ScottishOpera**

*La bohème* Cast and Creative list

Mimì **Elizabeth Llewellyn**

Rodolfo  **Sam Sakker**

Marcello **Roland Wood**

Musetta **Rhian Lois**

Colline **David Ireland**

Schaunard **Arthur Bruce \***

Alcindoro **Francis Church**

Actor/Dancer **Jessica Rhodes**

\*The Robertson Trust Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2019/20

Conductor  **Stuart Stratford**

Director **Roxana Haines**

Designer  **Anna Orton**

Lighting **Andrew Burnside**

Assistant Conductor  **Derek Clark**

Assistant Director **Katie Smith**

Translation  **Amanda Holden**

*La bohème* Performance Diary

**Scottish Opera Edington Street Production Studios, 40 Edington Street, Glasgow, G4 9RD**

Sat 5 Sep, 5pm

Tue 8 Sep, 5pm

Thu 10 Sep, 5pm

Sat 12 Sep, 5pm

Sun 13 Sep, 5pm

For more information and to buy tickets, which cost £20, visit [www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/la-boheme](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/la-boheme)

Pop-Up Opera Cast and Creative Team

Storyteller                                           **Allan Dunn**

Sopranos                                            **Sarah Power** & **Stephanie Stanway**

Baritone                                              **Aidan Edwards** & **Andrew McTaggart**

Cello                                                    **Andrew Drummond Huggan**

Guitar   **Sasha Savaloni** & **Ian Watt**

*A Little Bit of Don Giovanni*

**Mozart arr.** Derek Clark

**Illustrations**  Tim Gravestock

*A Little Bit of The Gondoliers*

**Gilbert & Sullivan arr.** Derek Clark

**Illustrations** Otto Von Beach

*The Song of The Clyde*

**Music** Karen MacIver

**Words** Allan Dunn

**Illustrations** Iain Piercy

Pop Up Opera Performance Information

*Please note tickets are free, however you may be required to pay an entry fee to some sites*

**For booking details and further information, please see www.scottishopera.org.uk.**

**The Beacon Arts Centre, Custom House Quay, Greenock, PA15 1HJ**

Fri 4 Sep, 2.30pm & 4.30pm

Sat 5 Sep, 12pm, 2.30pm, 4.30pm

**National Museum of Flight, East Fortune Airfield, East Lothian, EH39 5LF**

Sun 6 Sep, 12.45pm & 3.15pm

**Platform, 1000 Westerhouse Rd, Easterhouse, Glasgow, G34 9JW**

Fri 11 Sep

**The Riverside Museum, 100 Pointhouse Rd, Govan, Glasgow, G3 8RS**

Sat 12 Sep

Sun 13 Sep

**Eden Court, Bishops Road, Inverness, IV3 5SA**

Sat 19 Sep 12pm, 2.30pm, 4.30pm

Sun 20 Sep 12pm, 2.30pm, 4.30pm

**Heart of Hawick, Live Borders, Melrose Road, Galashiels, TD1 2DU**

Thu 24 Sep

**Edinburgh Zoo, 134 Corstorphine Rd, Corstorphine, Edinburgh, EH12 6TS**

Sun 27 Sep, 11am, 1.30pm & 3pm

Further dates and locations to be announced.

Notes to Editors

Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland. It was founded by Alexander Gibson in 1962 and was inaugurated with a production of *Madama Butterfly* at the King’s Theatre in Glasgow. In 1974 Scottish Opera purchased the Theatre Royal Glasgow, which reopened in 1975 as Scotland’s first national opera house. The Orchestra of Scottish Opera was founded in 1980.

Notable achievements include the world premiere of James MacMillan’s *Inés de Castro* at the 1996 Edinburgh International Festival; complete *Ring* cycles at the 2003 Edinburgh International Festival, which won the 2004 South Bank Show Award for Best Opera Production; and the Achievement in Opera Award at the 2017 UK Theatre Awards for Sir David McVicar’s production of Debussy’s *Pelléas and Mélisande*; and a Herald Angel for the European premiere of Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* at the 2019 Edinburgh International Festival.

Commissions include *Five:15 Operas Made in Scotland* (2008–10), *The Lady from the Sea*, *Clemency*, the double bill of *In the Locked Room* and *Ghost Patrol* (premiered at the 2012 Edinburgh International Festival), 2016’s *The Devil Inside*, with which Scottish Opera made its North American debut in Toronto, and 2019’s *Anthropocene*. *Ghost Patrol* won a South Bank Sky Arts Award, and *In the Locked Room* and *Ghost Patrol* were nominated for an Olivier Award. In 2018, the company made its US debut with *BambinO* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and returned to the city’s Brooklyn Academy of Music with Mark-Anthony Turnage’s *Greek* later that year.

Scottish Opera is committed to bringing the widest possible range of opera, performed to the highest possible standards, to the maximum audience throughout Scotland and the UK. Each year it performs in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness and dozens of other theatres, village halls and community centres. It also operates an extensive programme of outreach and education work which involves over 9,000 primary school children every year, as well as many other activities including adult learning and *Unwrapped* taster sessions. Scottish Opera receives core funding from the Scottish Government, as well as income from box office, and private and commercial support.

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**For additional press details please contact:**

Julie McLaughlin, Press Officer, 07825981241, julie.mclaughlin@scottishopera.org.uk